

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BANGKO 10380 101458Z
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 NSC-05 HA-05 ICA-11 CIAE-00
INR-10 NSAE-00 DODE-00 PA-01 BIB-01 SP-02 H-01
IO-13 /077 W
-----070364 101504Z /72

P 100954Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2829

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 10380

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SREF
SUBJECT: REFUGEE VOYAGE FROM SATTAHIP TO LAEMSING

REF: BANGKOK 10218

1. PETER COLLINS OF CBS TV INFORMED US
APRIL 10 THAT HE AND MEMBERS OF HIS TELEVISION CREW
HAD ACCOMPANIED THREE BOATLOADS OF REFUGEES FROM
SATTAHIP TO LAEMSING APRIL 7. WE HAD LEARNED FROM
OTHER SOURCES APRIL 8 OF THE COMPLETION OF THIS VOYAGE
AND THE STORY THAT RTG OFFICIALS AT LAEMSING WERE
NOT PERMITTING THE REFUGEES TO DEBARK FROM THE
THREE BOATS, NOR FROM A FOURTH WHICH HAD JUST ARRIVED
DIRECTLY FROM VIETNAM. WE ALERTED THE REGIONAL
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNHCR. HE DISPATCHED ONE
OF HIS OFFICERS TO LAEMSING APRIL 9. HE REPORTED
THAT TWO BOATLOADS HAD ALREADY BEEN ADMITTED TO THE
CAMP BY THE TIME OF HIS ARRIVAL, AND HE ARRANGED
FOR THE OTHER TWO TO FOLLOW SUIT.

2. IN RECOUNTING THE TRIP, COLLINS SAID THAT HE
HAD LEARNED THROUGH TWO OTHER UNHCR OFFICERS WHO
HAD VISITED SATTAHIP THAT THE REFUGEES WERE ABOUT
TO LEAVE FOR LAEMSING IN FACT, HE SAID, THE UNHCR
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BANGKO 10380 101458Z

OFFICERS ADVISED THEM TO DO SO. TWO OF THE BOATS
HAD BEEN AT SATTAHIP FOR APPROXIMATELY A MONTH,
AND THE THIRD, LOADED WITH STUDENTS FROM SAIGON,
HAD ARRIVED ONLY SEVEN DAYS PREVIOUSLY. COLLINS
SAID THAT HIS ARRIVAL MAY HAVE SPED UP THE DEPARTURE
DATE BY A DAY OR SO, BUT THAT THERE WAS NO QUESTION
THAT THE REFUGEES INTENDED TO GO ANYWAY.

3. WHILE ON THE HIGH SEAS, A TRAWLER WITH A RTG MARINE POLICEMAN ABOARD STOPPED ONE OF THE BOATS WHICH WAS SOME DISTANCE FROM THE OTHERS, AND RELIEVED SOME OF THE PASSENGERS OF THEIR WATCHES. THE TRAWLER SCOOTED OFF WHEN THE OTHER TWO BOATS APPROACHED.

4. UPON REACHING LAEM SING THE EVENING OF APRIL 8, A LOCAL THAI POLICEMAN ON SHORE FIRED HIS GUN INTO THE AIR, AND REFUSED PERMISSION FOR THE THREE BOATS TO LAND. COLLINS AND HIS CREW WERE NEVERTHELESS ALLOWED TO GET OFF. COLLINS RETURNED TO THE CAMP THE MORNING OF APRIL 8, AND REFUGEES TOLD HIM THAT THE POLICEMAN HAD THREE TIMES DEMANDED GOLD FOR PERMISSION TO DEBARK.

5. THE REFUGEES ALSO TOLD HIM THAT THEY HAD HAD TO PAY SIX TAELES OF GOLD TO FISHERMEN WHEN THEY WERE ORIGINALLY ON THEIR WAY TO SATTAHIP, AND THAT WHEN THEY ARRIVED AT SATTAHIP, LOCAL AUTHORITIES THERE DEMANDED GOLD FOR PERMISSION TO LAND. IT IS UNCLEAR WHETHER ANY GOLD WAS HANDED OVER EITHER AT SATTAHIP OR LAEMSING.

6. COLLINS LEFT FOR BANGKOK THE MORNING OF APRIL 8.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BANGKO 10380 101458Z

SOMETIME DURING THAT DAY ANOTHER BOAT CAME IN DIRECTLY FROM VIETNAM. WHEN THE UNHCR REPRESENTATIVE ARRIVED AT MID DAY APRIL 9, TWO OF THE FOUR BOATS HAD ALREADY BEEN GIVEN PERMISSION TO LAND AND REFUGEES HAD DEBARKED. HE ARRANGED THROUGH PROVINCIAL AND DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVES FOR THE OTHER TWO BOATS TO FOLLOW SUIT. THERE WERE OVER 130 REFUGEES IN ALL, 89 OF THEM FROM SATTAHIP.

7. COLLINS BELIEVES THAT CBS WILL BE PLAYING THE SCENES OF THE VOYAGE DURING THE NEXT COUPLE DAYS.

8. COMMENT. COLLINS IS AWARE THAT THE RTG IS LIKELY TO ASSUME THAT HE STAGED THE WHOLE TRIP. WE MENTIONED TO HIM THAT ONE OF THE RUMORS IN CHANTABURI WAS THAT HE HAD SHOWN THE VESSELS THE WAY TO LAEMSING. HE REEMPHASIZED THAT THE REFUGEES HAD BEEN PLANNING THE TRIP ANYWAY, AND THAT ALTHOUGH HE MAY HAVE GIVEN THEM SOME COUNSEL ON THE LAY OF LAEMSING WHILE EN ROUTE, HE DID NOT LEAD THEM TO THAT DESTINATION. WE FEAR THAT THIS EVENT WILL FURTHER CONVINCE THE THAI OF

THE MERIT OF THEIR POLICY "TEMPORARILY" BARRING JOURNAL-
ISTS FROM REFUGEE CAMPS (REFTEL).
WHITEHOUSE

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REFUGEES, SEA RESCUES, REFUGEE CAMPS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BANGKO10380
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780153-1244
Format: TEL
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780476/aaaacmlj.tel
Line Count: 119
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: f99eaab3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 BANGKOK 10218
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3025547
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REFUGEE VOYAGE FROM SATTAHIP TO LAEMSING
TAGS: SREF
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/f99eaab3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014